



# PRESS RELEASE Arizona State Senate

1700 W Washington Street, Phoenix, AZ 85007

**Senator Steve Gallardo, LD29, Senate Democratic Whip**  
**Senator Katie Hobbs, LD24**

## PRESS RELEASE

January 16, 2014

### Senate Republicans' misguided priorities

**STATE CAPITOL, PHOENIX** – The Senate Democratic Caucus released the following statements on the fact that Senate Republicans chose to use their first week in session to weaken gun laws, expand a controversial private school funding program and legalize discrimination of people for their gender, religion or sexual preference.

- SB1063: Facilitates the carrying of firearms in public establishments and at public events.
- SB1064: Weakens public safety by changing the definition of a firearm under state law. Allows felons access to dangerous weapons and exempts guns that can be fired after "mechanical repair" from state laws that apply to other guns.
- SB1048: Expands the corporate School Tuition Organization tax credit to allow owners of S corporations to donate to STOs through their companies and receive the tax benefit on their individual income taxes. Strong neighborhood public schools are essential to healthy vibrant communities and to statewide economic competitiveness. Allowing a state tax credit for STO contributions, which diverts tax dollars to pay for scholarships to attend private religious schools, undermines the state's ability to support strong neighborhood schools.
- SB1062: Expands the definition of "exercise of religion" to include not just individuals, but any legal entity such as businesses, associations, foundations, etc. and allows them to discriminate against anyone because of their gender, religion or sexual preference.

#### **Senate Democratic Whip Steve Gallardo, LD29:**

"There are a lot of critical issues on which the people of Arizona need their elected leaders to focus: a dysfunctional Child Protective Services; an economy just getting back on its feet; our kids' underfunded schools; and our crumbling roads to name a few," said Sen. Gallardo.

"Given their important and sometimes life-threatening nature, voters should expect the first bills of the session to address our most pressing problems. But today's misguided bills do not reflect the priorities of Arizonans."

#### **Senator Katie Hobbs, LD24:**

"Supporters claim this bill will protect a person, business or other group because of their views on marriage. The truth is this bill removes protections for same sex couples and legalizes discrimination against them under the fallacy of religious freedom," said Sen. Hobbs.

"Allowing discrimination against loving, committed couples certainly doesn't follow the religious ideals with which I was raised."

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